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Viewing cable 08SANSALVADOR843, EMERGING PLAN B SHOULD THE FMLN WIN 2009

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08SANSALVADOR843	2008-07-14 22:29	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy San Salvador

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.wikileaks.elfaro.net/es/201106/notas/4393/>

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSN #0843 1962229
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 142229Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9786
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 000843

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/14/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ES](#)
SUBJECT: EMERGING PLAN B SHOULD THE FMLN WIN 2009
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Classified By: The Ambassador, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: Salvador Samayoa told us of a "Plan B" in the works to insulate El Salvador from (leftist) FMLN mischief should Mauricio Funes win the March 2009 election. The draft plan is reportedly focused on preventing a catastrophic (conservative, pro-U.S.) ARENA loss in the Legislative

Assembly, early selection of Supreme Court magistrates by the current Assembly, and legislative strengthening of existing Salvadoran institutions before the 2009 elections. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Salvador Samayoa, peace accords negotiator, former FMLN member, and now member of the National Development Commission and political commentator, told PolCouns July 11 of consensus among the former ARENA presidents and others of the need for a "Plan B" should the FMLN's Mauricio Funes defeat ARENA candidate Rodrigo Avila in March 2009 elections.

Samayoa described an undisclosed meeting he attended in late June of the former ARENA presidents (Cristiani and Calderon Sol attended; Flores sent a personal representative) and Salvadoran business leaders including Roberto Murray Mesa, Ricardo Poma, and Arturo Sagrera. Former President Cristiani reportedly told the group that while he had serious doubts about Avila's ability to win the election, they should all do everything in their power to secure his victory. That said, he proposed, and the group concurred, that given the risk of a Funes victory, they needed to develop a "Plan B" in order to "save El Salvador" should Funes win the election. Cristiani proposed elaborating such a plan then having the former Presidents present it to Salvadoran President Sacal, explain their support for Avila's candidacy and campaign, but alert him to their concerns of a Funes victory and inform him of their efforts.

¶3. (C) As described by Samayoa, the plan has several components, two of which Samayoa believes are the most important. He said the group is elaborating a plan to maintain near parity between the FMLN and ARENA in the Legislative Assembly in January 2009 elections. Samayoa offered few details, but said the entire group believed a Funes government accompanied by a strong FMLN majority in the Assembly would spell disaster for El Salvador.

¶4. (C) The other significant component of the plan would focus on control of key institutions, including the Supreme Court and Armed Forces. Concerning the Court, Samayoa noted that five justices must be replaced by July 1, 2009, four of whom sit in the constitutional chamber of the Court. The group believes it is essential their replacements be decided by the current Legislative Assembly (standard practice since the 1992 peace accords) not postponed until the Assembly to be elected in January 2009 is seated May 1 of that year. While the group expects complaints and opposition from the FMLN, they believe electing the new magistrates is achievable, but it will be difficult, since each must secure a 2/3 majority (56 of 84 deputies). Samayoa said that in addition to support from its usual allies, ARENA would need the support of sometimes FMLN ally CD (Cambio Democratica or Democratic Change) and would still need to "buy" two more votes from the FMLN. Regarding the Salvadoran Armed Forces, Samayoa only said the plan envisaged ensuring the Armed Forces were well cared for and in a position to maintain their independence.

¶5. (C) Samayoa lamented the arbitrary way the Sacal government had manipulated Salvadoran ministries and other institutions (including the Attorney General's Office) to pursue its own political ends and to satisfy the desires of political allies in and out of government. A Funes government would be delighted to inherit a government structure that was so undisciplined and easily manipulated, therefore the group of former presidents plans to propose several key legislative reforms to impose order before the 2009 elections.

¶6. (C) Comment: Samayoa makes no attempt to hide his disappointment in Avila and his candidacy. He is equally disdainful of those in ARENA who are solely focused on the March 2009 presidential election and believes that by ignoring the January legislative vote, they put El Salvador's future at risk. While the former Presidents' (and others') pessimism is bad news for Avila, the fact that they are taking a long view and attempting to fireproof El Salvador from feared FMLN mischief is reassuring. We will report separately on Avila's successful Sunday, July 12 mega-rally

in one of San Salvador's big soccer stadiums.

GLAZER